



March 26, 2013

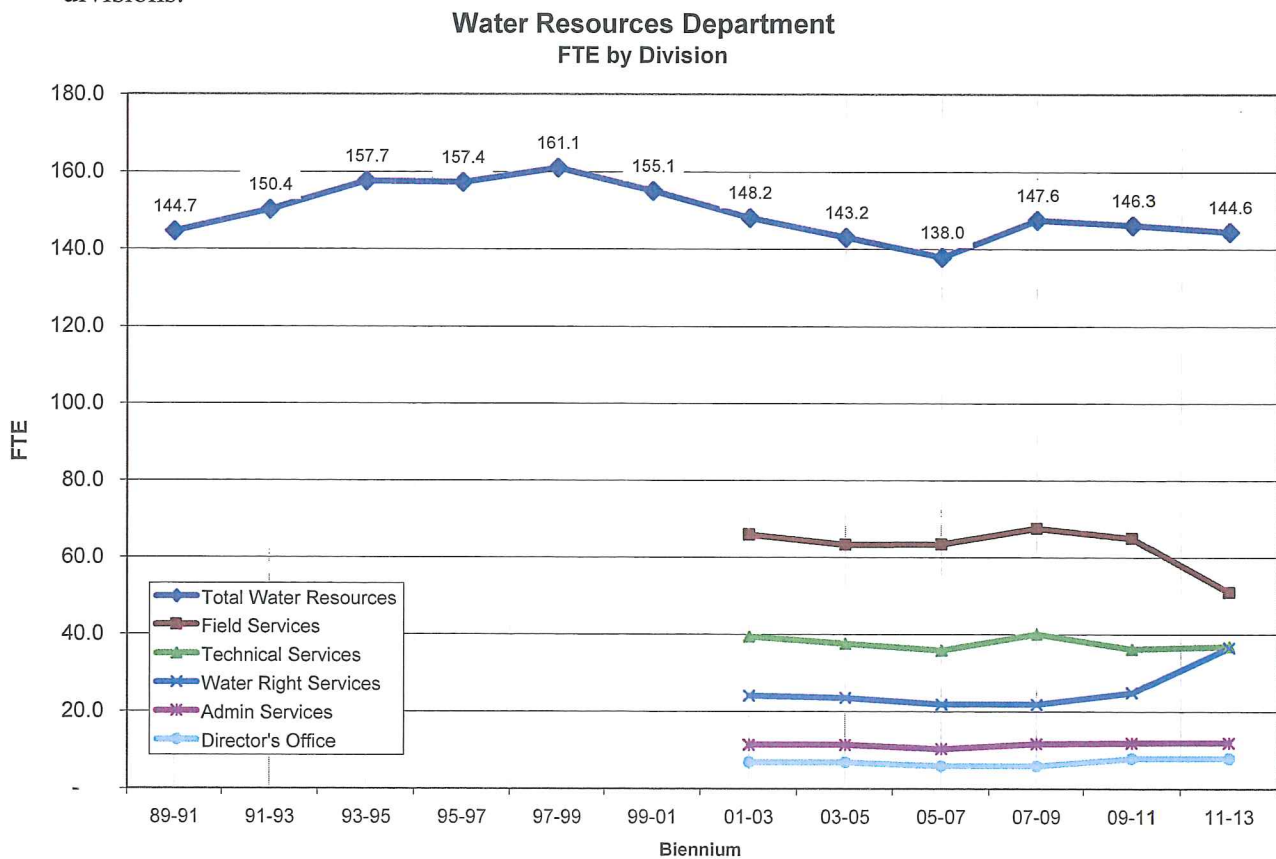
Senator Chris Edwards, Co-Chair and
Representative Ben Unger, Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Edwards and Representative Unger,

During the Water Resources Department's March 25, 2013 budget hearing, the Natural Resources Subcommittee of Ways and Means asked several questions. Below are the Department's responses.

Question 1. How has the number of FTE declined, by division, over the years?

Below is a line graph depicting the Department's decline in FTE during the past 12 years. Superimposed on the graph is the change in FTE in each of the Department's five divisions.



Note: Although the Field Services Division appears to have declined in numbers since the 2009-11 biennium, these positions were transferred into the Technical Services and Water Right Services Divisions.

Budget cuts in recent years have included staff positions in the following Divisions:

	<u>Admin Services</u>	<u>Field Services</u>	<u>Technical Services</u>	<u>Water Rights Services</u>	<u>Director's Office</u>
2001-03					
Employee Dev't Trainer	x				
Reception / Mail Clerk	x				
Clerical Support in the field		x			
Water Right Transfers (SW)		x			
Public Information Officer					x
2003-05					
Accounting Technician	x				
Water Supply Dev't Fund	x				
Final Proof Survey Staff		x			
Water Right Transfers (NW)		x			
Assist. Watermaster (Klamath)		x			
Clerical Support in the field		x			
2005-07					
Finance Manager	x				
Receptionist	x				
Final Proof Survey (NCentral)		x			
Water Use Reporting			x		
Public Service Rep				x	
Intergovernmental Affairs					x
2007-09 -- no reductions					
2009-11					
Water Measurement Tech		x			
Oregon Plan 1		x			
Oregon Plan 2		x			
Water Measurement Tech			x		
Water Use Reporting (again)			x		
Information Tech. Developer			x		
2011-13					
Contracts / Procurement	x				
Information Systems Mgr.		x			

Note: The preceding line graph and table do not include the decline in county-funded staff during the past 30 years. At the height of the program, counties provided another 40 staff members to help the Department with its water management responsibilities in the field. Today, counties provide 15 staff members in watermaster offices.

Question 2. How has the decline in performance in Key Performance Measure #3 (water right holder compliance) corresponded to a decline in state and county-funded field staff?

Key Performance Measure #3 has held steady at 94 to 95 percent compliance for the past several years, although it traditionally had enjoyed numbers in the 97 to 98 percent range.

The best example to illustrate compliance and staffing is with our partner Josephine County. Historically a strong supporter of water management, Josephine County reduced its support of four FTE (two assistant watermasters and two office support staff) to zero FTE. Having two assistants allowed the watermaster to divide up roughly 3,500 points of surface water diversions on the Williams Creek drainage, Rogue, Applegate, and Illinois Rivers. The watermaster in that county now covers all of these points of diversion alone. This is further complicated by the increase in highbank mining activity in Josephine County.

There are other areas of the state with diminished compliance:

Compliance is down in District 6, which includes Union and Wallowa counties. In the late 1980s the watermaster position for Wallowa County was eliminated and duties were consolidated with Union County. Increasing regulatory and measurement pressures are driving the need to re-fill the watermaster position for Wallowa County.

Compliance is also down in Klamath County. While staffing levels have not changed in recent years, there has been increased emphasis on investigating water use ahead of the March 7, 2013 completion of the Klamath River Basin Adjudication.

Often, when field staff are added, a decrease in compliance is experienced in the first few years. This was the case when the legislature added five new assistant watermasters in 2007. A three point drop in compliance occurred in 2008 as this new field presence allowed for more thorough inspections.

Question 3. What is the total number of gaging stations in Oregon?

The state of Oregon posts data from more than 425 stream and lake gages on its website. More than 200 are operated by the Water Resources Department itself (more than 150 are near real-time). Another 225 are operated by the U.S. Geological Survey.

In addition, there are a number of other entities who operate stream and lake gages in Oregon, and who make data available independently. They include:

Douglas County	20 Gages
H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest	8
Idaho Power	16
The Freshwater Trust	29
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	50
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	102

Question 4. What is the total number of monitoring wells in Oregon?

The Department has more than 360 wells in the State Well Net, which is measured and reported as part of the Department's Key Performance Measure #6. The Department uses more than 680 additional wells to monitor project sites and other temporary conditions.

The U.S. Geological Survey collects data from more than 90 wells, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has more than 500 wells from which it collects water quality data (e.g., near gas stations and other potential sources of groundwater contamination).

That totals more than 1,630 monitoring wells for various purposes and lengths of time.

Question 5. How often do Water Management and Conservation Plans have to be updated and what are the rates of compliance?

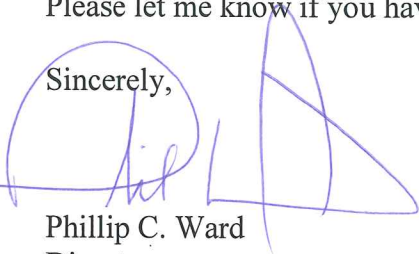
Water Management and Conservation Plans (WMCPs) are generally updated every ten years, unless the WMCP is not complete and a work plan is needed to correct those deficiencies. In such a case, the WMCP update is due in five years.

The Water Resources Department can place various conditions on new water use permits to submit a WMCP, or it can place conditions on permit extensions, requiring the water user to submit a WMCP and get approval from the Department before accessing undeveloped water. Of the plans that are due to the Department, approximately 68 percent have submitted an acceptable plan in a timely manner.

Other entities can also require water users to develop a WMCP. The Water Resources Department has no control over or involvement with these requirements. For example, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation requires WMCPs for agricultural water suppliers who have contracts for Bureau of Reclamation stored water; the Oregon Health Division Drinking Water Program may require drinking water providers to have a WMCP as part of a Water Master Plan or System Capacity Analysis; the Oregon Infrastructure Financing Authority may also require a WMCP as part of a loan.

Please let me know if you have further questions about any of these responses.

Sincerely,



Phillip C. Ward
Director

